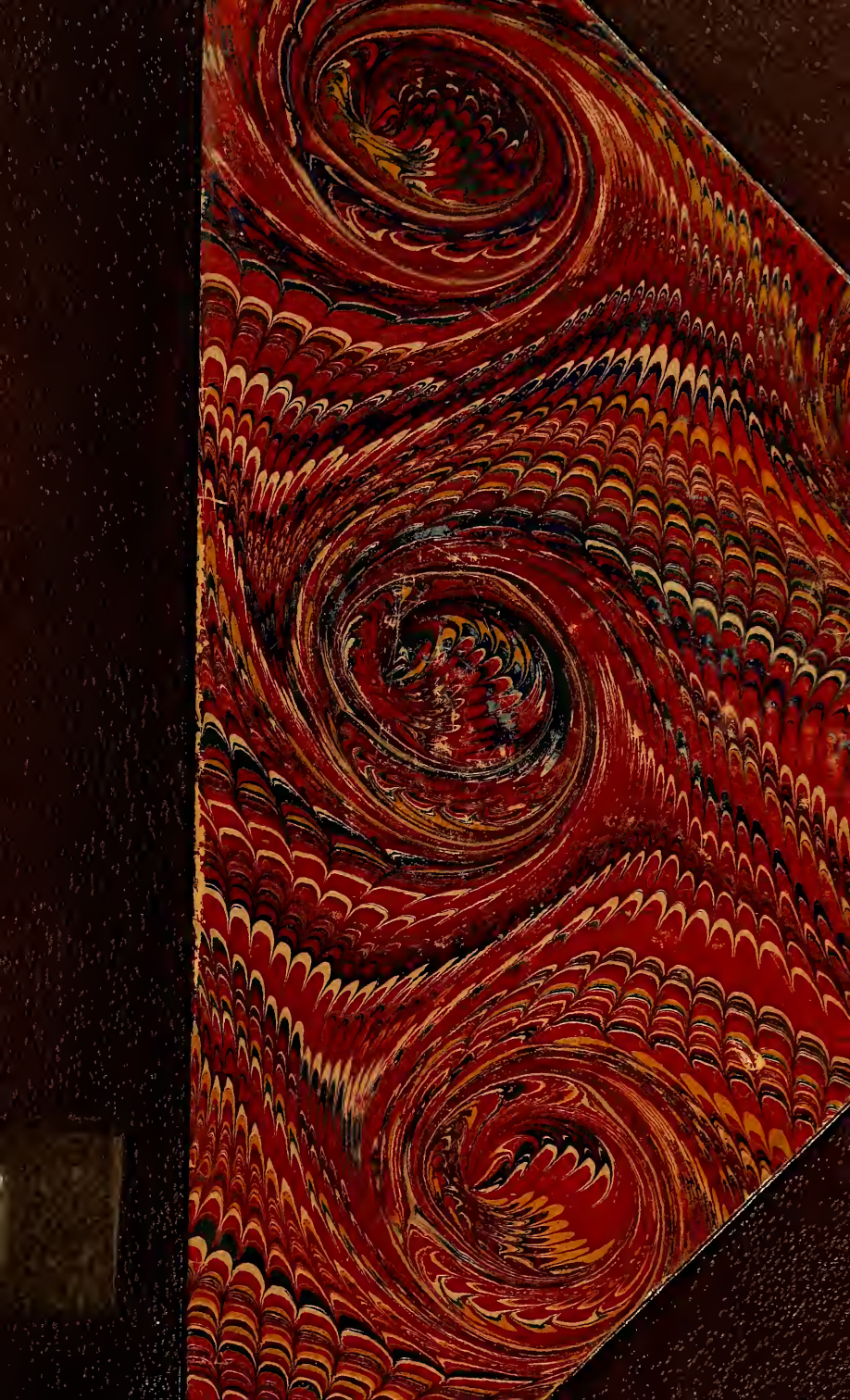




PRINT
362.41

B.

THE BLIND: AN OCCASIONAL PAPER.

C. 1

DATE DUE

PRINT
362.41

B.

THE BLIND: AN OCCASIONAL
PAPER.

C. 1

LIBRARY

IOWA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

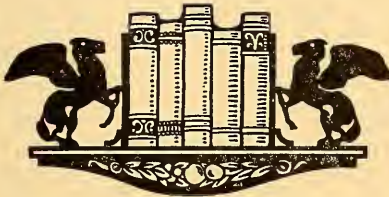
Fourth and Keosauqua Way

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Print
362 41
B

Catalogue of
The

Ex Libris



**Braille Institute of
America, Inc.
Los Angeles**



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

The Blind.

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

No. 5.

JANUARY 20TH, 1899.

All communications for the next number must be sent on or before March 17th to Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Hon. Editor, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

The Editor does not of necessity identify himself with opinions which may be expressed in the signed articles or in letters of correspondents, and the right is reserved of not printing any letter which may seem not to come within the limits of a discussion likely to be profitable. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

Copies of this Paper, price 3d. each, or 3½d. post free, can be obtained from the Editor.

EDITORIAL.

In this number is printed a most interesting and important article by Mr. Pine, Superintendent and Secretary of the Midland Institution for the Blind, on a subject that all who work on behalf of the Blind ought to have very much at heart.

In fact the two burning questions of the day seem to be (a)—how to enable children to complete their instruction, when the assistance from the School Authorities ceases at the age of 16, and (b)—how best to care for the Blind on leaving school and to ensure for them remunerative work when fully instructed.

Mr. Pine has kindly shown me the replies to his letters enquiring of the Secretaries of the respective Institutions what was being done on the lines of the "Saxon System," and it is indeed amazing and disquieting to find that in spite of the repeated and energetic appeals on behalf of the introduction of this system by the late Dr. Armitage, Dr. Campbell, Mr. A. Buckle, and others, and in spite of the weighty words in the Report—issued nearly ten years ago!—of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, etc., "that the adoption of the Saxon System is of the utmost importance to the Blind of this Country," there are those working on behalf of the Blind who have never even heard of the Saxon System, and ask for information about it! It is a pity that the Education Department did not adopt the suggestion of the Royal Commissioners, that this system "might be imposed as a general condition of the grant."

HENRY J. WILSON.

3. New Schools for Blind and Deaf Children under the Leeds School Board will probably be opened about the end of May. In October last we paid a visit to the new Building in course of erection. It has a fine exterior, and the internal arrangements seem as complete as possible, including an elaborate system of ventilation and heating. Each Department will be distinct in its working, and there will be accommodation in the Department for the Blind for 59 Boarders and 30 Day Scholars. The Blind children will be taught on the ground floor and the Deaf on the first floor. There will be large assembly halls, numerous classrooms, separate dormitories and staircases for boys and girls for both the Blind and the Deaf, day-rooms, sick-rooms, lavatories, bath rooms, and in the basement a large swimming bath. Facilities will also be provided for cookery, Sloyd woodwork and physical exercises. There are 55 pupils in the temporary schools, 19 of whom are day scholars. The Inspector in his last report states, "The discipline and attainments are highly creditable to Miss Hawk and her staff, who are evidently devoted to their work." Miss Hawk is an old "Gardner Scholar" and pupil of the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood, and so also are other members of her staff. She has not only proved herself an experienced teacher, but also uses all her influence in School and out to elevate the condition of the Blind. There are Band of Hope Meetings once a week, and last year a number of the pupils passed an examination in connection with the Church of England Temperance Society, and five of them gained prizes. Another old "Gardner Scholar" and pupil of the Normal College is doing excellent work as Visitor to the Blind of Leeds.

4. The Committee of the Institution for the blind at Hull, and especially Dr. Rockliffe, the indefatigable Hon. Secretary, are to be congratulated on having completed the rather large scheme which they laid before the public in 1892. The scheme was as follows :—

1. The setting apart of a room in the workshops for dining room purposes only.

2. The providing a workroom for women entirely apart from the men.
3. The construction of new workshops for men whereby nine additional men could be employed.
4. The providing larger warehouse accommodation and sheds for storing willows.
5. The providing a Home for Blind Women.
6. The purchasing of the adjoining site to carry out the above.

In January, 1898, everything had been accomplished with the exception of the Home, and the Committee, feeling the burden of the debt thereby incurred with their bankers, and a mortgage of £800 still remaining on the premises, determined to make a strenuous effort to raise £3,000 to complete the scheme and to pay off the mortgage and other liabilities. The Committee of the Gardner's Trust were approached, and generously made a grant of £300 with a promise of an additional £200 when the sum of £2,800 had been raised locally. The stimulus thereby given proved a great success and the £3,000 have now been raised and the Institution and Home are free from debt. The Home has been planned so as to allow freedom and independence to the inmates, and to make it a "Home" in every sense of the word. On two floors of the house there are ten separate bedrooms for blind women, each room has a window and contains a bed, chest of drawers, etc., and each inmate has her own key, a duplicate being retained by the Matron. There are lavatories with hot and cold water on each landing, and a special sickroom with fire place on the same floor as the Matron's bedroom. The ground floor contains one large room, a portion of which is partitioned off to form a window work-room with large plate glass front, and it is intended to have the various workpeople of the Institution at work in this place, when not used for displaying the goods for sale. The remainder of this floor forms a common sitting room, where each inmate will have her own private cupboard and armchair, in addition to the ordinary furniture, and there will be a library and pianoforte. The Home will be opened probably before these lines appear in print.

5. It is pleasing to announce that new workshops, 18 feet wide, are in course of erection at Wolverhampton. The building consists of two floors, and on each there will be accommodation for 28 workpeople, instead of 12 as in the old premises. The site cost £1,105, and the workshop will be well lighted and ventilated, very commodious, heated with hot water, and will cost about £750. The sale shop has been lengthened by nine feet, and two large windows inserted at a cost, with fittings, of about £250.

6. The results of the examination, held last July, by the Education Department at the Smith Training College at Norwood are as follows:—Miss Lily Bell and Mr. Alexander Pearson passed their Second Year's Certificate Examination in the First Division. They were formerly students of the Royal Normal College, and are now acting teachers. Four students, Misses Nellie Adams, Florence Brautigam, Annie Gape, and Bella Luker, passed the Second Year's Examination in the First Division; three students, Misses Alice Higgins, Fanny Kay, and Alice Newman, passed in the First Division, Part I., Second Division, Part II.; one, Miss Nellie Smith, First Division, Part I., Third Division, Part II. Five students, Misses Alice Balchin, Nellie Swithinbank, Bessie Thomas, Emily Whitehouse, and Mr. Wm. Sharp, passed their First Year's Examination; all were placed in the First Division in Part I., three in the Second, two in the Third in Part II. Three students passed the Queen's Scholarship Examination and have begun their first year's work. Two others were prepared, but the Code required that they should be eighteen on September 1st, and as they did not become eighteen until three or four weeks later, they were ineligible to compete. Two acting teachers from Henshaw's Blind Asylum, Manchester, passed their First Year's Examination. Mr. Chas. Tivey was placed in the First Division, Part I., Second Division, Part II. Miss Eliza Fitzsimmon, Second Division, Parts I. and II. Two who were formerly pupils at the School in Newcastle entered for the Queen's Scholarship Examination, and one of them, Miss Alice Meiklejohn, passed.

7. The Lending Library, at 114, Belsize Road, London, N.W., was incorporated on September 15th, and the name of the Association is "The Incorporated National Lending Library for the Blind." The first President is the Rt. Hon. James Bryce, M.P., and the first Vice-President, Lady Frederick Cavendish, who are *ex-officio* members of the Executive Committee, consisting altogether of twelve members. A copy of the Memorandum and of the Articles of Association has been forwarded to us, and it is pleasing to know that this Library, which has proved so useful to the Blind, has now been placed on a sound footing for their permanent benefit.

8. The School Board at Newcastle-on-Tyne have agreed, subject to the approval of the Educational Department, to make a donation of £1,000 to the Building Fund of the Royal Victoria School for the Blind, provided that the Board are allowed to be represented on the Committee of the School.

9. We are pleased to see that Mr. Alfred Hirst's most interesting article entitled "My Dark World," which appeared in *The Sunday Magazine*, has been reprinted as a pamphlet, by the British and Foreign Blind Association. We should be further indebted to the Association if it would stereotype the article in Braille.

10. Miss Moon visited America last year, and proposes to pay another visit this year in order to advocate the starting of Home Teaching Societies and the use of books in Dr. Moon's type. During her last visit Home Teaching was planned and is now being carried out in Boston, under the surveillance of Mr. Anagnos, of the Perkins Institution, who has bought several volumes of books, and made arrangements for teachers to search out and teach the blind. Similar work has been started in connection with the Free Circulating Library at New York, to which a complete set of books in Moon's type has been presented and the expense of a teacher guaranteed by two private individuals. At the Free Library at Philadelphia a room

is set apart in which to keep the books in Moon's type, and a superintendent is appointed to attend to them, whilst the Home Teaching Society provides a teacher.

11. There is a vacant Gardner Scholarship of the value of £50 a year tenable at the College for the Blind sons of gentlemen at Worcester. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary of the Gardner Trust, 53, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

12. Can anyone recommend a cheap typewriting machine serviceable for the blind, other than the "Simplex?" The price not to exceed £10.

13. It may not be generally known that Mr. T. W. Levin, M.A., whose name appeared in the list of University Graduates printed last July, is the author of "Six Lectures on the Philosophical Writings of Cicero," "Notes on Inductive Logic," "The Logic of Money," &c., &c. Mr. Levin graduated as Senior Opt. in 1861 and has been blind since 1848.

14. At the time of going to press we have heard nothing further from the Education Department in regard to the paper of suggestions for intending exhibitors at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.

15. It may be interesting to our readers to have some further information about Mr. R. H. Rhys, J.P., to whom brief allusion was made in the last number. The following is a copy of the address presented to him, and is a wonderful record of most important and useful work by a blind man:—

"To Rees Hopkins Rhys, J.P.,

"Plasnewydd, Aberdare.

"DEAR SIR,—Your long and eminent public services, extending over half a century, coupled with the approach of your eightieth year, have led your friends to think that some recognition thereof should be made by the ratepayers and inhabitants of the district, The high-constables of Aberdare and

of Merthyr Tydfil formed a committee, and privately made an appeal, which was immediately responded to, and a large amount contributed in a very short space of time.

“You have been appointed for the thirty-third consecutive time Chairman of the Aberdare Local Board of Health and District Council, during which period you have taken a leading part in the administration of its affairs and important undertakings, among which may be mentioned the construction of our waterworks, yielding a supply unsurpassed anywhere, and equalled in few neighbourhoods; a system of sanitation, acknowledged to be abreast of the most enlightened sanitary science, and completed at an economical outlay; and the Aberdare People’s Park, which is the pride of the inhabitants and unique in colliery districts.

“Out of a period of twenty-seven years you have been twenty-four years member, and twenty-one years chairman, of the Aberdare School Board. During that period fifteen schools have been built and many enlarged, affording accommodation for over 6,000 children, and it reflects great credit on the administration of the schools that, while efficiency has been maintained, the burden thrown upon the ratepayers compares most favourably with other districts.

“Your long and faithful services to the county, as one of the most active magistrates, and the fact of your having been for many years a member of most of the county committees, previous to, as well as since, the formation of the County Council, has resulted in considerable benefit to the ratepayers of the county, especially to those of the Merthyr Tydfil Union.

“During the fifty years you have been a member of the Merthyr Board of Guardians, your great experience has been highly valued, especially by those who have acted with you in the administration of its affairs. It having been determined by the Committee to commission Mr. Thomas Brock, R.A., to execute a bust of yourself, it is hoped that it may be allowed to adorn the council chamber of the Aberdare District Council, a place so intimately associated with your work, and it is our pleasing duty to ask your acceptance of this address and a sum

of one thousand guineas as a slight expression of the esteem and regard of the subscribers generally, and of those who have acted with you in many various capacities.

“ With our best wishes, we remain, yours faithfully,

“ THOMAS LLOYD, High-constable, Aberdare.

“ FRANK T. JAMES, High-constable, Merthyr.

“ LEONARD ACOMB, “ Hon. Sec. and Treasurer.”

After the presentation had been made, Mr Rhys, who spoke with very great feeling, said he very deeply felt his gratitude to the gentlemen present and to the subscribers for their mark of appreciation. Especially did he feel deeply that the following day would be the fifty-first anniversary of his blindness. The loss of his sight at that time was a great disappointment to him, as he had such excellent prospects in his business as a mining engineer connected with the Abernant Works. When that accident occurred, however, he determined to devote himself to public matters, and that object he had followed with all the zeal and determination he was capable of, and he felt much gratified to receive such a recognition from the hands of the ratepayers of the district for the services he had rendered, especially when he considered the great disadvantages he laboured under to carry out the policy he had laid down for himself directly after he recovered from the effects of the accident. Alluding to his service in reference to the waterworks, he said that had been a hobby of his since the first establishment of the private company which made the first small reservoir. That was a small beginning, but it had now developed to an important work, and had been the means, in conjunction with the system of sanitation and their sewage farm, of putting Aberdare in as good a position as most places, and better than many, in the point of general healthiness and comparatively low rate of mortality.

16. Within eleven days the Blind of Germany have been deprived of three of the most eminent, experienced and large-hearted Directors in the whole of Europe. and each of the three in his own way has had remarkable success in promoting the

self-dependent work of the Blind after their school period was ended. Director W. Mecker, of the Provincial Blind Institution of Düren, died on the 7th September, aged 59, after 30 years' eminently successful work. Especially noteworthy have been his labours and success in the direction of the society for helping the former pupils of the School in their after lives. Director Büttner, of the Royal Blind Institution, Dresden, died on September 14th, aged 56. He succeeded his father-in-law, the well-known Director Reinhardt, of the same Institution, in 1872, where he had worked two years previously as teacher. and during 26 years worthily carried on the splendid work of his predecessor. Director Rudolph M. Ritter Von Klar, of the Klar Blind Institution at Prague, died September 3rd, aged 54. For 25 years, with remarkable self-denial and devotion, he continued the work of his father, in the Institution which his grandfather founded, and whose name it bears.

17. It has been suggested, and the suggestion seems a good one, that a list of recently embossed publications should be given quarterly in these papers. We will gladly fall in with the suggestion if we are duly informed of new books as they appear. Otherwise it is impossible to do so.

18. A further suggestion requires more careful consideration, viz., that these columns should be opened for advertisements at a nominal fee from blind people seeking employment. We should be glad of our readers' opinions on this subject, and if it can be shewn that such arrangement would be really likely to benefit the Blind, we are quite prepared to try it. From our own experience, however, it would seem that the number of advertisers would be very large, and that the likelihood of a favourable response would be *nil*. At the time of penning these lines, we are trying, but so far in vain, to obtain regular work at some Blind Institution for a man who is admittedly one of the best all round basketmakers in London.

AFTERWARDS,

INSTITUTIONS FOR THE BLIND AND THEIR PAST PUPILS. A PROBLEM AND A DUTY.

The operation of the Act for the Blind of 1893—the main features of which are the compulsory education of all blind children at Certified Schools, a system of State Inspection, and the award of State Aid, has led to a great awakening and a decided improvement in the Blind Institutions of the country. A spirit of greater earnestness is noticeable; improved and additional methods of teaching have been introduced, and blind children are receiving the advantage of a more thorough and complete system of education. Much interchange of thought and opinion is also taking place amongst the various Institutions, and a great anxiety to afford the best possible training to their pupils is generally apparent.

The School authorities are fulfilling their responsible functions faithfully, with the result that the number of pupils attending the Schools has considerably increased. Our Blind Institutions are full to overflowing with children of a younger and more uniform age than was formerly the case.

The question then of the education of the young Blind is no longer a doubtful or debateable one. We know what is required to be done, and a system has been established which will no doubt show an improved condition of things and bear much fruit as time goes on.

The most serious question, however, which we must now ask ourselves—and the burden of its solution lies heavily upon us—is,

“WHAT AWAITS OUR PUPILS AFTER THEY HAVE COMPLETED THE PERIOD OF THEIR EDUCATION, AND WHAT ARE TO BE THE RESULTS AND THE OUT-COME OF ALL OUR TRAINING?” This is indeed the burning question of our time. I desire to submit it most earnestly to the Managers of Blind Institutions throughout the country.

In a few short years quite a small army of trained young blind workmen and women will be pouring forth from our

schools and technical workshops, ready and eager to begin the battle of life.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF THEM?

Hitherto English Institutions have as a rule considered that their task was over when their pupils left them. In the majority of cases little official cognizance has been taken of old pupils after they have passed from the care of our Institutions. Therein lies doubtless to a large extent, the reason for the large number of failures which are unhappily to be found about the country.

Some time ago the leading member of the Committee of one of our Blind Schools remarked to a well-known worker among the Blind ---“Most of our pupils when they leave us are supported at home by their friends, or what I think is far better, go to the workhouse. They have had four or five years at school which they will always look back upon with pleasure, so that the education they have received has not been thrown away.”

This must surely be an utterly erroneous conception of the function of an Institution for the Blind. I cannot think there can be many who would seriously hold such a misconceived view, but I fear the result of our work has too often been of a character to justify such a statement.

A statement was made by a speaker at the Conference of Managers and Friends of the Blind, held at Norwood in 1890, that the blind trained in the London Schools were at that moment begging in the streets by hundreds.

The Royal Commission also threw much light upon the condition of the adult blind. It stated that out of 1,267 blind men who had learnt trades in various Institutions only 734 proved, according to their own account, to be following the trade they had been taught. The Commissioners also found that out of 1,141 males who had been in Institutions, only 355 stated that they were able to maintain themselves, while 730 were unable to do so; and out of the 638 females who had been in Institutions, 75 were able to maintain themselves, while 544 were not.

Ten years have passed away since this inquiry was made and the question we now ask is, “Does this unsatisfactory state of things still exist?” I fear in some measure it does, Heaven

forbid that it should exist in the same proportion, but surely in any case there is abundant proof that it is the bounden duty of the Managers of every Institution to awake to this matter and to recognise their responsibility for the care of the pupils whom they have trained. For is it not sad, nay is it not cruel to remove these blind scholars from their frequently sad surroundings, educate them, stir in them some ambition and hope, and accustom them to a better state of things, fit them to obtain their own living, and to spend a useful industrial life, and then allow them for want of timely help to realise only disappointment, to gravitate to the workhouse, or what is even worse to the streets. ?

The very training that they have received—mental, moral, physical and technical, may only serve to make them feel more keenly their unhappy position, and thus result in deepening their woe. What wonder that the blind man with degradation and poverty staring him in the face feels himself at enmity with all around, and in spite of his ability to work sinks lower and lower because he has not the *opportunity* to work, These are no extreme statements, but they are truths which have, unfortunately, too often been verified. As with the sighted so with the blind, honest work is the true remedy, and the want of occupation means poverty and the misery begotten of poverty.

For the purpose of this paper I have recently made enquiries at a large number of the workhouses of this country, and I regret to find that amongst the inmates there are a considerable number of blind persons who have been trained, in some cases for a long period, in our Institutions. Unhappily, some of our wealthiest Institutions figure frequently in the returns.

What after all is the great object of all our efforts and training ? What is the crux of the whole Blind question ? Is it not to render our Blind self-supporting, and to enable them to become responsible and respected members of society ? And if for the want of aftercare and supervision our pupils fail, is not the initial object of our training Institutions imperilled ?

What then must be our course ? We must seek to give our young Blind the very best education both mental and physical, the very best manual training and the very best

all-round preparation for the battle of life in our power, and we must recognise that our work thus accomplished is then only *half-done*. Every Institution must realise that it is as much a part of its duty to watch over and continue in close relation with its former pupils as it is to train them.

I desire to put strongly to all the authorities of Institutions throughout the country, that as the young Blind are now all to be swept into the net of instruction, as all are to come under the influences of education and training, we must in equity accept the responsibility of assisting them to realise the benefits of the training they have received. How must this be accomplished? I think the solution must be found in one of two ways.

I. WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND. There is little doubt that more Workshops are needed in the country, and it is gratifying to know that additional ones have recently been established at Northampton, Middlesborough, and Whitby. It would be a good thing if similar small workshops could be started in suitable centres not already covered by existing Institutions in other parts of the country. It is unquestionably the fact that many men, perhaps from want of business energy or force of character, are much more suited to working for others than for themselves. If those who have had a satisfactory training could find immediate employment in workshops, much of the difficulty would be solved. This method has been the one most relied on in the United Kingdom, and there is much to say in its favour. Given such workshops the blind worker has little anxiety or responsibility. Regular daily work, and with it regular income are secured. Good materials are supplied, purchasers are found without loss of time to the blind for the goods when made, suitable workrooms as regards space, warmth and cleanliness, with proper tools, are provided, as well as other advantages which might be enumerated. But the accommodation in existing workshops is at present very limited, and it would be impossible for those trained in Institutions to find employment therein, while some Institutions have no Workshops attached. In 1886 there were in all Schools for the Blind in England

1,260 pupils (there are doubtless many more now), and the whole Workshop accommodation, including those Workshops attached to Institutions, was 547. Reckoning the average stay of each pupil at eight years, 157 would leave annually, so that but few of these could be received into existing Workshops, nor is it likely that the trade of these would expand in the same proportion as the pupils trained. There must, therefore, be a considerable number who from one cause or another have to work for themselves. We must then have,—

II. CARE AND ASSISTANCE FOR INDEPENDENT WORKERS.

Some there are who prefer to start in business for themselves, and it is very desirable that when possessed of the necessary energy and force of character they should be scattered among the seeing population, and enabled to work independently as seeing workmen do, for it is not desirable that all the blind should be gathered together into centres for employment in workshops.

The system of caring for and supervising former pupils working independently is the plan chiefly adopted on the continent. It is a method which has met with great success in many parts of Germany, and a long experience has satisfied the German Authorities that under it almost all the pupils become successful. This plan, known by the name of "Fürsorge," commenced at the Dresden Institution in the little kingdom of Saxony, where it has been in operation for over fifty years, and it is known in England as the "Saxon" system. It is equally successful in the province of Schleswig Holstein and at Mecklenburg, as well as at Vienna and Paris. The system consists mainly in the Institution keeping in touch with all its former pupils. The "Fürsorge" society connected with the Institution takes care that the old pupils, as long as they behave themselves properly and work to the best of their ability, shall receive such moral and material support that they shall in no case be driven to apply for parish assistance. In fact the receipt of such relief, or begging in any form, disqualifies them from any participation in the Fund. The essential feature is, that the Institution continues *in close relation with all its*

former pupils, and assists them by every means in its power, to maintain themselves by carrying on the trade they have been taught.

A brief account of the system as carried on in Saxony may be given as follows,—

When the Director of the Institution considers that a pupil is sufficiently master of his trade to be able to support himself, he looks out for some suitable opening for him in his own locality, and unless there are any special reasons why he should not go home he returns there. If his home or surroundings are unsuitable then some other place is found for him. The Director visits the locality where the pupil is to settle and arranges for some leading person in the district to act as his guardian or foster-parent, so to speak. This is usually the clergyman, doctor, mayor, or some other benevolent practical person of influence. His duties are to advise the blind man in his business whenever necessary; introduce him to customers, keep an interested and watchful eye upon him, and to keep the Director informed as to his circumstances and conduct. The pupil is also expected to write to the Institution at stated times saying how he is getting on and giving full particulars about himself. Then as long as the pupil conducts himself properly he is sure to be assisted from a Fund established in connection with the Scheme to whatever extent is necessary. The pupil is started with an outfit of tools and materials, or whatever is suitable for his particular business, supplied with materials at cost price as required, and is assisted if necessary when suffering from sickness or accident, or whenever any extra outlay is needed which it is beyond his power to defray. The Institution will further assist him by selling the goods which he is himself unable to dispose of. A Register is kept at the Institution for every blind person from the time he enters the Institution, and this Register is continued after his discharge until his death or until the "Fürsorge" is withdrawn.

The Director visits the former pupil from time to time, and also in case the guardian desires advice or help. The results of these visits, as well as all communications from the guardian,

the letters from the blind person, and every document relating to his case, are entered in the Register.

The Assisting Fund in Saxony is now considerable. The State pays the entire expenses of the Institution, so that all the subscriptions, donations, interest on invested capital, and four-fifths of the profits on the sale of the pupils' work go to the Fund, which amounts to £2,000 per annum. About 400 persons receive help from the Fund, which thus averages about £5 each. Under this Scheme it is stated that 80 to 90 per cent. of all the former pupils are able to get on without receiving any parish assistance. The Fund is principally required amongst the old and sickly and the women. Very few of the blind women of Saxony are able fully to support themselves.

In Saxony it is considered well that each former pupil should have something from the Fund every year. Those who do not require it receive simply a sort of acknowledgment, and thus a larger amount is available for expenditure where requisite.

This system with various modifications is carried out more or less in almost all German Institutions.

In formulating any Scheme on the lines of the Saxon system it must be borne in mind that our Institutions are not like those in Germany and America maintained by the State.

The reform would thus involve a good deal of additional expense, for a separate Fund would need to be set apart for the purpose.

Further, to carry out the system perfectly would greatly increase the labours of the Director or Superintendent of the Institution, for this, in itself, would almost absorb the time of one individual, and he would require the services of an additional officer, for amongst his most important work would be the supervision of former pupils.

I have recently made enquiries of every Institution in this country, and I find there is no Institution in which this system is carried out in its entirety. It is evident, however, that much more attention is being turned to the matter. At several Institutions, notably at York, Birmingham, and Nottingham, with which last Institution I have the honour to be connected, there

are separate Trust Funds for the purpose, while much is done in a systematic way to supervise and assist former pupils. In various other Institutions some effort is made in the same direction, but in a number of others little of a practical character appears to be done. In some, the Saxon system is not even known, and I have been asked in several instances for information on the subject. To my mind a heavy burden of responsibility rests upon the Managers of those Institutions, in possession of large accumulated funds, who continue to allow their pupils to drift, and pay so little attention to this important matter. I may add that at Nottingham this question was regarded as of so much importance that it was adopted as our scheme for the Jubilee of the Institution a few years ago, and though, unfortunately, our income from Invested Capital is less than £300 a year apart from this Fund, the sum of £2,000 together with £1,000 from a generous donor, was set aside, as a Fund for this purpose.

To summarise, I would lay down this broad principle that the training of the blind must involve one of two things. We must either provide ourselves for the Direct Employment of the blind, or arrange for the care of Independent Workers by some systematic scheme on the lines laid down above. For those who leave the Institution this "Care System" means all the difference between success and failure. The great and good Dr. T. R. Armitage, whose loss we shall never cease to mourn, stated that he had not the smallest doubt that it would be the greatest reform which could be introduced into our English Blind School system. While he lived, in season and out of season, he never ceased to advocate it, and it is well known to many of us how earnestly he laboured. He even went so far as to urge, in his examination as a witness before the Royal Commission, that the after success of former pupils should be the gauge by which State Aid should be given to Institutions for the Blind, and in this view he was strongly supported by the late Mr. Mundella. He has gone to his rest, let it be our part to endeavour to follow in his foot-steps, by carrying out the system he felt to be of such paramount importance.

Much has been done for the blind during this century. Especially during the last twenty years have great strides been made in our Institutions. The introduction of Kindergarten and Technical Training, Gymnasiums and Physical Training,—a few years ago there was scarcely an Institution with a Gymnasium—Typewriting, the growth of our industries, and last but not least, the recognition of the Blind by the State, have given a great impetus to our cause, and this Nineteenth Century may well be called “THE FIRST CENTURY OF CARE FOR THE BLIND.” Is it too much to hope, that in the century so soon to dawn, a brighter and happier state of things, the outcome of an honest independence, may also dawn for the blind?

H. W. P. PINE.

Superintendent and Secretary.

Midland Institution for the Blind, Nottingham.

THE REPORT ON SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Since our last number was issued the report of the Committee of Council on Education on Schools for the Blind and Deaf, with appendices, has been published. The report, however, is more than a year old, as it is for the year ended 31st August, 1897. During that period the accommodation for blind children in certified schools increased from 1476 to 1616, additional accommodation having been provided for 140 children. The number of scholars on the books of these schools increased from 1226 to 1280. It is pleasing to know

that in the summer of 1897 circulars were issued to the School Authorities calling for returns of all blind children between the ages of 5 and 16, and that, as a result, many previously neglected cases have been brought to light. Mr. King, H.M. Senior Chief Inspector of Schools, refers to the progress made during the year, the respective merits of Day Classes and Boarding Institutions, the need of regular attendance, the placing of the feeble-minded in the ordinary institution, the Smith Training College, higher payment of blind teachers, the statutory school age, and the general efficiency of institutions. We cordially endorse the suggestion that the blind teachers' salaries should be increased, especially as now, at the Smith Training College, they obtain a certificate of attainments bearing the stamp of a public examination equal in difficulty to the examination for sighted teachers. The following words in H.M. Inspector's report are a most complete and just representation of the state of the case, "A work which requires special science, extraordinary patience and devotion, deserves adequate remuneration. The patience, the perseverance, the tender devotion to their charge that the teachers, men and women alike, exhibit, cannot indeed be bought with a price, but we owe them something more than an expression of admiration."

When, however, we read Mr. King's remarks about the statutory school age, it must be confessed that we are much disappointed. He says that the consideration of the proposal to extend the school age to 18 "must be deferred till experience has shown whether a longer period of school life is really required." This statement is indeed disappointing when we know that in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind published about nine-and-a-half years ago, it is recommended—and the recommendation is that of experts after hearing a mass of evidence—"That from 16 to 21 the School Authority should have the power and duty to give to all the necessitous blind a liberal grant to maintain themselves while they are learning a trade." It will also be remembered that in December, 1896, a deputation, introduced by the late Lord Playfair, consisting of representatives from the Schools

for the Blind and of others, approached the Duke of Devonshire, with the unanimous desire to have the school age extended. The question is how to arrange that those children, who are anxious to complete their instruction in a trade, shall not have the financial assistance withdrawn from them on their 16th birthday, as is now the case, whereas a further period of secondary or technical education seems absolutely necessary. Mr. King also writes, "When the scholar can support himself partially, it is only fair that the parent, not the State, should supply the deficiency of the cost of maintenance, and in the few cases where the scholar is absolutely friendless, voluntary agencies may be relied upon to complete the training." This recommendation is apparently opposed to the above quoted one of the Royal Commissioners, and we must say that for "few cases" we should be inclined to read "the many cases." It seems to us that by far the majority of the parents of children in our Schools for the Blind are unable to meet the naturally heavy expenses of completing their children's education and instruction. In the year 1898 just ended the Committee of the Gardner's Trust for the Blind have assisted 158 pupils to complete their training at various institutions at a cost of £4703, but this does but touch the fringe of the whole question.

Once again, Mr. King writes, "The Guardians of the Poor have already power, and in most cases the will, to assist in the maintenance of older children." But the power of the Guardians is *permissive* and not *compulsory*. We admit that many of them do grant the requisite assistance, but is it right that the blind children who appeal to those Guardians who have *not* the will, should suffer on that account, and live out their lives, already so heavily handicapped, still more handicapped from the fact that they have been prevented from completing their instruction in the trade by which they hoped to maintain themselves? As we write, we have two letters before us from the clerks of two different Boards of Guardians, giving an emphatic refusal to render assistance to two children on completing the age of 16. There is also a newspaper extract with an account of the last annual meeting of the Institution

for the Blind at Birmingham. At this meeting the Chairman is reported to have said "...at that age (*i.e.* 16) the blind were not always in a position to earn their own living, and the Committee were anxious to prolong the period of instruction. For this purpose Boards of Guardians were empowered to contribute, but it was difficult sometimes to obtain assistance from them. For instance, in one case the Aston Guardians would not help a boy because the Institution was in Birmingham, and the Birmingham Guardians refused because he belonged to Aston." This shuttlecock policy is certainly not conducive to the well-being of the Blind. On all sides there are cries for help for the Blind at this critical age, and whilst penning these lines, a letter, unsolicited and unexpected was received from the Secretary of the same Institution, from which the following paragraph is culled. "The difficulty of providing for our Blind Pupils after the age of 16 is yearly increasing. In 1899 at least twelve pupils will be withdrawn by School Authorities, and we have no scholarships or other means forthcoming (except in one case) unless the parents are willing to apply to the Guardians, and the Guardians are also willing to continue the payments. It is to be hoped that this serious state of things will not long continue, and that the Government will take active steps to make provision for the training of the Blind after the age of 16."

If there be an exhibition this year in London of the educational appliances, etc., for the Blind, which are going to be sent to the Paris Exhibition in 1900, would it not be well to try to approach the Lord President of the Council on Education again on the urgency of this question? And if there be a deputation, would it not also be well meanwhile for every Institution and Society to keep the letters received from Guardians who refuse to aid the Blind above 16 years in completing their instruction in a trade? Such letters would afford a strong proof of the necessity of either making the power of the Guardians compulsory instead of permissive, or of extending the powers of the School Authorities.

HENRY J. WILSON.

THE GENERAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND,
BIRMINGHAM.

9th December, 1898.

TYPEWRITING FOR THE BLIND.

To the Editor of "The Blind."

DEAR SIR,

I have read Mr. Hirst's letter of September 23rd, 1898, published in "The Blind." Although materially differing from him, I propose to discontinue the discussion, unless you think it would be *in the interests of the Blind* that I should reply.

Your readers will be interested to know that my Committee have recently opened Typewriting Offices in the centre of our city, and Miss Percy, F.I.P.S., has been engaged to manage this Department. Every modern appliance necessary has been introduced into these Offices, and all descriptions of work are executed. A Commercial School for the "Sighted" has also been opened. Our Blind Operators give instruction in Typewriting, while tuition in Book-keeping, and Shorthand is imparted by Miss Percy. It may appear somewhat novel that such a school should be established, but it will be readily understood that it is easier work for the Blind to teach than to operate (although, of course, they do the latter as well), while the income from the fees for teaching will materially help the finances of our Typewriting Department.

I have just learned from Mr. Illingworth that the prize of £5 offered in "Hora Jucunda" for the best System of Shorthand for the Blind, has been awarded to our three Blind Clerks, who entered the competition. This system is the one we have been using here for some time, and the same for which a Bronze Medal was recently awarded to this Institution. Practically the whole of our correspondence is dictated through this system. If you think fit, I shall be pleased to fully explain it in a subsequent number of your Magazine.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY STAINSBY.

Secretary.

[NOTE.—The editor is quite in agreement with Mr. Stainsby and thinks this correspondence had now better cease.]



112686

